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Farm Broadcasters Letter



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications

Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2662

May 13, 1994

DEFINING HEALTHY FOODS -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture has joined with the Department of Health and Human Service's Food and Drug Administration in determining when the word "healthy" can be used on food labels. To qualify, the new rules specify that the food products must meet low levels of fat and saturated fat. The amount of cholesterol and sodium is restricted. The foods must contain at least 10 percent of the daily value of either vitamin A, vitamin C, iron, calcium, protein or fiber. The term "healthy" can also be used on raw meat and poultry products that meet USDA's definition for "extra lean." Processors have until November 1995 to reformulate products and labels to meet the definition. The Food and Drug administration, which regulates all foods other than meat and poultry, has set January 1996 as its compliance date for pre-existing products. The rules are in response to the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990 to ensure that claims used on food are truthful and not misleading. **Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.**

REPORT CHANGES -- The format of USDA's World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates has been changed. Certain reports and tables are now located in other sections of the main report, some reports are presented in a new format, and others discontinued. The changes coincide with a new release time of 8:30 a.m. ET, part of a one-year trial of releasing certain market-sensitive reports in the morning hour. The information will be available on USDA's Computerized Information Delivery System (CIDS). The cotton report, however, is held until the full report is release at the usual 3:00 p.m. time. USDA's Crop Production Report will also have format changes and be released at 8:30 a.m. on CIDS. The full report will be available at 3:00 p.m. on the reporting day. **Contact: Raymond Bridge (202) 720-5447.**

HELPING MINORITY FARMERS -- Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy is taking steps designed to stop discrimination and reverse past trends of declining farm ownership by African-Americans and socially disadvantaged farmers. Local offices of Farmer's Home Administration (FmHA) have been directed to use 100 percent of operating and ownership loans targeted to socially disadvantaged farmers, and increase the percentage of farms sold or leased to the group. FmHA will also report to the Secretary its outreach activities and accomplishments. Espy has worked closely with Congress to ensure funding for assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers. More than \$495 million has been appropriated to minority farmer programs. Espy says he is working to enforce the strongest Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights policy in the history of USDA. **Contact: Leslie Parker (202) 720-2798.**

MARKET PROMOTION -- USDA Market Promotion Program funds of \$100 million have been allocated to 59 commodity groups and regional trade organizations for fiscal year 1994. The funds provide priority assistance to small businesses and offset unfair trading practices. Later this year opportunities will be announced for U.S. firms to participate in USDA's Export Incentive Program. **Contact: Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623.**

WILDERNESS RESEARCH INSTITUTE -- Dr. David Parsons has been appointed as director of the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute, in Missoula, Montana. He assumes the post on May 16. Parsons was a research scientist with the National Biological Survey in Three Rivers, California. The Institute is an interagency research organization. It conducts research into use and management of wilderness; coordinates research efforts among government agencies, schools and private organizations; and provides technical assistance on international wilderness-related issues. **Contact: John Denne (202) 205-0974.**

TREE ASSISTANCE SIGNUP -- Nursery owners have an opportunity to sign up for 1993 losses of nursery inventory under the Tree Assistance Program. The signup will be held through July 29, 1994. Under the program the Commodity Credit Corporation will reimburse eligible small and medium scale commercial growers up to 65 percent of costs for weather-related loss of annual and perennials that exceeds an adjusted amount. Application and payments will be made through county offices of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. Payments for losses cannot exceed \$25,000 per person. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

REDUCING COSTS -- USDA has examined its dairy product laboratory procedures and applied new efficiencies in administering product tests. The payoff is a proposed reduction in charges. Certain procedures can now be conducted in half the time previously required. USDA can charge less for those tests. Under the law the USDA dairy product testing program must be self supporting. **Contact: Clarence Steinberg (202) 720-6179.**

HELPFUL NEMATODES -- A new nematode species found in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas is being used to control citrus root weevil. Orange, grapefruit, lemon and lime growers lose millions of dollars annually in crop damage caused by the weevil. In greenhouse tests the newly found nematode killed 80 percent of weevil larvae, compared to 60 percent killed by current nematode species. **Contact: William Schroeder (407) 897-7379.**

FARMWORKER EARNINGS -- The national economy ended 1993 on a high note, with increases in rural and urban employment. Rural unemployment dropped in the fourth quarter of 1993, but remained higher than before the recession. But latest figures show that the weekly earnings of full-time hired farmworkers in 1992 averaged \$240, about half of the \$446 earned by other wage and salary workers. Only private household workers averaged lower weekly earnings than farmworkers. **Contact: Linda Ghelfi (202) 219-0520.**

WATCH THE CALORIES -- It is very difficult to conduct food restriction studies on people, therefore scientists conduct tests on animals whose systems similarly use nutrients. When rats are fed a copper-deficient diet containing high levels of sugar, the rats suffer damage to the heart and pancreas, become anemic and die prematurely. By reducing the food intake to amounts normally consumed, USDA scientists significantly reduced the symptoms of copper deficiency and the rats lived throughout the 10-week study. Using test animals has provided important findings. Studies in test animals have resulted in prevention of cancer and age-related diseases as well as doubled the animals' life span. **Contact: Sam Bhathena (301) 504-8422.**

Complaint or comment? Use these numbers:

Radio-TV (202) 720-4330	Radio-TV FAX (202) 690-2165	AgNewsFAX (202) 690-3944
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FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

WEEKLY CASSETTE:

AGRICULTURE USA #1927 -- Mosquitoes still pose a threat to public health around the world, but some people say the current methods of controlling the pests pose a similar threat. **Jim Henry** talks with experts about new environmentally friendly methods of control. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1408 -- Pollution and your lawn mower; tips for growing great roses; getting started with "birding"; more seafood from farms; kenaf products gaining ground. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1919 -- First grain estimates for the new year; big opportunities for U.S. cotton; outlook good for aquaculture; low input forage; stubborn forage plant; fungus protects potatoes; tree assistance program. (Weekly reel of features.)

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE:

During the period May 16-23 we expect to have statements from Secretary Espy's trip to South America. Days of the feeds and content are unknown at the time of FBL deadline. Check the newswire every day of that week.

Wednesday, May 18, ag outlook summary; Thursday, May 19, catfish processing, outlook for former Soviet Union; Friday, May 20, cattle on feed, livestock and dairy outlook, wheat outlook; Monday, May 23, trade update; Tuesday, May 24, crop & weather update, feed outlook; Thursday, May 26, cotton & wool outlook; Friday, May 27, ag export outlook. Monday, May 30, HOLIDAY. These are the **USDA** reports we know about in advance. Our Newswire carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359
COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- **Lynn Wyvill** reports on safe use of cutting boards, with information about USDA's meat and poultry hotline. 2:00. Additional soundbites by **Susan Conley**, USDA meat and poultry hotline manager, on the safe use of cutting boards (with B-roll). 4:00.

Patrick O'Leary reports on National Public Service Recognition week ceremonies in Washington, D.C. Government agencies such as USDA observed the occasion to educate the public about the diversity of its missions. 1:53.

Eric Parsons reports on ASCS 1993 dairy refunds to producers that totaled more than \$80 million. 2:00.

Joe Courson, University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, reports on a strawberry grower whose niche farming enterprise is unique, growing strawberries on plastic. 1:30.

On Satellite Galaxy 7, transponder 9, channel 9, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 3880 MHz.: Thursdays from 3:45 - 4:00 p.m., ET; Mondays 11:00 - 11:15 a.m., ET.

OFFMIKE

GROWING CONDITIONS...have been quite cool this spring, says **Don Wick** (KWOA, Worthington, MN). Recent snows did not hurt crops, and added needed moisture. The soils are in great shape, what's needed are warmer temperatures. Don is chairing an Idea Exchange at the NAFB North Central region meeting in Yankton, June 2-4 on ways to improve the ag broadcasting business. Don is also chairing NAFB's professional improvement effort. He's planning a seminar on The Future of Farm Broadcasting, looking down the road 5-10 years.

A GOOD SUMMER...is needed, says **Von Ketelsen** (KOEL, Oelwein, IA). Spring has been quite variable, highs near 80 degrees, and wind chills to 14. He reports producer attitudes as one of cautious optimism. Von is CHATS editor. He recently drove to Illinois to meet with NAFB historian **Art Sechrest** (WJBC, Bloomington) to review early ag broadcaster photos in the collection at the University of Illinois. Von has been producing the NAFB REFLECTIONS section in the CHATS newsletter. Von says we'll be seeing the results of his trip.

Farm Broadcasters Letter



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Room 528A
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250-1340

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A COMPUTER CONTROLLED...digital audio system has been installed to activate automated playback systems and improve recording quality, says **Max Armstrong** (WGN/Tribune Radio Network, Chicago). Automatic re-feeds of one-minute market reports and the Midwest Market Close are also featured. The network's Midwest Livestock Report has been moved from 11:47 a.m. to Noon.

MILD WINTER CONDITIONS...were apparently nice to insects, says **Hap Larson** (KBUF, Garden City, KS). The wheat crop is looking good, but producers are concerned about an outbreak of Russian wheat aphids. If pest problems remain small the crop could come in above average. In Garden City next month Hap and his station will be covering the 26th annual Beef on Fridays cattle judging contest. Congratulations to Hap. The Kansas Association of County Agricultural Agents presented him an award honoring his outstanding support of county agents.

VIC POWELL
Office of Communications